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# Press Release

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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER**

### *Speaker Anġlu Farrugia meets Speaker of the Albanian Parliament Gramoz Ruçi*

Speaker Anġlu Farrugia met the Speaker of the Albanian Parliament Gramoz Ruçi for the first time and discussed avenues for further cooperation. Speaker Farrugia mentioned the excellent relations between Malta and Albania and recalled the state visit made by the President of Malta Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca in February 2016 as well as the more recent visit by a business delegation. Speaker Farrugia highlighted that Malta and Albania have various opportunities on the horizon and said that the current momentum should be maintained. On this note, the Speaker welcomed the recently established Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group and recognised that this will further facilitate cooperation and opportunities for the two countries.

Speaker Farrugia also stated that Malta will continue to support the accession of Albania to the EU and looks forward to more countries recognising the importance of the Balkan States joining the single market and being fully participant in the EU's four freedoms, that is the freedoms of movement, goods, services and capital. As it has already done in previous years, Malta will continue to push forward the importance of dialogue with neighbouring countries, especially towards the east and south. The Speaker went on to say that there can be no peace and prosperity in Europe if there is no peace and prosperity in neighbouring regions such as the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

The Speaker of the Albanian Parliament Gramoz Ruçi expressed positive remarks with regard to the possibility of strengthening cooperation between the two countries and mentioned the Parliamentary Friendship Group as an excellent tool to bring into fruition a more productive relationship. He thanked Malta for its participation and commitment to promote tolerance and peace and recognised the importance of sustaining closer cooperation with a country that has always had positive remarks about Albania. He further explained that accession to the EU is very important for Albania, especially the younger generations, and went on to say that he welcomed Malta's support.

Speaker Farrugia is currently participating in the 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace in Tirana, Albania, between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> of November and is also holding a number of high-level meetings. The Speaker is accompanied by MP Glenn Bedingfield, a member of the International Affairs Committee of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace.